(iii) Cashewnut Processing Plant, Agartala.

(iv) Zonal Offices: Guwahati, Imphal and Agartala.

(v) Sales outlets: Guwahati Airport, Agartala Airport, Agartala Industrial Estate, Agartala Secretariat.

The ongoing programmes of NERAMAC are as under:—

(i) Trading and marketing of ginger, true potato seeds, chillies, supari, fertilizers and seeds.

(ii) Production of processed cashewnut at the Cashew Processing Unit, Agartala.

(iii) Repairing of aseptic packaging unit at Fruit Juice Concentration Plant, Nalkata (Tripura).

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The main items of package are: Plant and Machinery (Rs. 3.75 crores), Pre-operative Expenses (Rs.1 crore), Pressing Creditors (Rs. 1.01 crores), Training (Rs. 22 lakhs), Contingencies (Rs. 38 lakhs), Working Capital (Rs. 3.20 crores) and VRS (Rs. 80 lakhs), and writing down the equity by Rs. 1.22 crores to restructure the balance sheet as on March 31st, 1998 so as to bring down the accumulated losses as on that date to zero. The Rehabilitation scheme envisages upgrading of the existing facilities for Pineapple and Cashew processing plant, overhauling and maintenance of existing plant and machinery in PSC unit, addition of ginger processing plant, offering Voluntary Retirement Scheme to surplus employees and training of personnel.

All actions like Release of Funds and providing Reliefs and Concessions (writing off the Loans, Interest and Capital subsidy, Writing Down Equity and Release of Subsidy Arrears) required to be taken at Government end, stand accomplished.

(d) and (e) The BIFR Package was formulated and approved after the past performance of NERAMAC was evaluated. Thereafter, a 10 year plan with effect from 1st April, 1999 has been worked out to ensure that the company is properly activated.

Use of ash for production of props

†1264. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether it is a fact that ash produced by power projects is proving useful for increasing the production of crops;

(b) if so, whether any test has been conducted in this regard;

(c) the percentage increase in the productions of crops as a result thereof; and

(d) the total quantum of ash produced by the thermal power projects in the country, every year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) The preliminary studies carried out by Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) on the use of fly ash in agriculture show that it has potential of being used for increasing crop production.

(b) and (c) The ICAR have conducted short term studies on crops, such as bajra, mustard, wheat, rice and groundnut where yield increase has been observed. The Department of Science & Technology, is also implementing a Mission Project on fly ash. Under this Project, with the use of fly ash, an average increase in crop yields of the order of 15-25% has been observed. Fly ash also contains toxic/heavy metals which may affect the soil health adversely in the long run. The results of long term studies under the Mission Project will, therefore, help in understanding the overall effect of fly ash on crop yields and soil productivity.

(d) The production of fly ash from the Thermal Power Stations in the country during 1998-99 was estimated to be around 80.0 million tonnes.

Adulteration in fertilizers

1265. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received complaints regarding adulteration in fertilizers, insecticides and chemicals due to which production is declining every year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to prevent this malpractice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (c) No cases of large scale adulteration of fertilizers, insecticides and chemicals have been reported